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Salt Lake Tribune
March 10, 1998

THE PUBLIC FORUM

Letters from The Tribune's readers

A Climbers' Shrine

The LDS Church announced last week its plans to quarry granite from Little Cottonwood Canyon for its new assembly hall (1 million square feet) being built adjacent to Temple Square. The land on which it intends to gather the granite is owned by the LDS Church. However, this area (called by climbers the Gate Buttress and Green Adjective Gully) is intensely frequented by local and visiting climbers, and has been for five decades.

The area is rich with climbing history and has been the stomping grounds for generations of climbers. These boulders and cliff walls have inspired countless outdoor enthusiasts, many of whom are nationally and internationally renowned. Many climbers have discovered and realized major life goals on the walls of this canyon.

This area is special and irreplaceable. Once destroyed, it can never be regained. All the proposed activity will result in permanent damage to the natural aesthetic of the entire canyon. Church officials claim that the majority of the industry will be invisible from the road. Anyone who knows the area involved knows that this is unlikely and, indeed, irrelevant due to the permanence of the results.

We must not allow the LDS Church to proceed without helping it understand the intensity of feelings among the thousands of local climbers for this area. The Gate Buttress and environs are our holy shrines, much as the temple is to Mormons.

To LDS Church officials, I plead: Please respect our heritage as climbers, just as we respect your heritage as pioneers. Your nostalgic attachment to the granite in Little Cottonwood Canyon is understandable. The convenience of using high-quality Little Cottonwood Canyon granite is undeniable. But please know that your actions are permanent and will result in the loss of an incredible natural resource that cannot be replaced.

Please re-evaluate your needs and leave these areas untouched; it is a precious place for many thousands of climbers, both Mormons and gentiles.

DAVID L. BUDGE
Salt Lake City

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Banks Don't Need Protection

Your editorial "Reining in the Credit Unions" (Tribune, March 1) was so far off the mark it looked like it was written by some bank executive. When banks are charging just to talk to a teller and other outlandish fees, it is time to rein in banks. Credit unions are just the way to do it

Where to Write

- When submitting letters to the Public Forum, please include your full name, signature, address and daytime telephone numbers. Information other than your name and the city in which you live are kept confidential.
- Keep it short. Concise letters developing a single theme are more likely to be published.
- Please type and double space.
- Letters are condensed and edited.
- Because of the volume of mail received, not all submissions are published.
- Mail to Public Forum, The Salt Lake Tribune, P.O. Box 867, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110.
- Our fax number is (801) 237-2316.

Only Hunters' Views Count

I recently attended a regional meeting of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, one of several held throughout the state to present the "Wildlife Strategic Plan." We were told that in addition to obtaining our approval for the plan, they wanted public input. Some of us were naive enough to believe our opinion could make a difference.

It had been announced in the press that one of the main topics of discussion would be "the possible elimination of the 'Fall Bear Pursuit Season,'" the cruel practice of pursuing bears with hunting dogs, prior to the actual hunting season. This, and the practice of "baiting the bears" during the hunt was the reason many of us attended the meeting.

"Baiting" entails placing food near the den of a bear that has been hibernating all winter so that when it comes out, hungry, it is attracted to the food, where the brave sportsmen (?) are waiting to shoot them, so that they may boast of their hunting prowess.

There were 11 board members present (eight of whom are hunters), and after addressing this "good-ol'-boy" panel, it immediately became obvious that they were not interested in the opinions of environmentalists; their only concern was to accommodate the hunters and outfitters present.

The vote of the panel was unanimous to continue the bear pursuit, and they didn't even entertain a motion to eliminate baiting. At first I was angry, but now I feel ashamed that the state of Utah allows a minority (hunters) to determine the fate of our wildlife by stacking the DWR with people whose only interest is "how many animals can be harvested."

GENE A. THOMPSON
Brigham City

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Let Road Be Completed

Smith's Helps D

I have worked with people with disabilities in an employment 13 years. Many people with disability have asked for my help with Smith's and the alleged name-calling incident.

Although I am not personally in this case, I do shop at Smith's, as well as many other stores in various areas. I have seen there are uniformed helpful to the baggers who are employed there. I've seen across the Salt Lake Valley Smith's stores. One man gave me money to a bagger who was another Smith's allowed head injury to visit the store a time. The Smith's employees to help her.

Smith's employs many people with disabilities all over the Wasatch-Cache National Park area, commodating their schedules, restructuring jobs, and treating them as equals. Obviously there is a lot of work out between Smith's and young man involved in this case. It is important that people with disabilities have the positive impact Smith's employment for people with disabilities in the community.

DAVID L. BUDGE
Ex-Officer
Jordan Valley Support

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How to Reform Social Security

Since Social Security is on the "front burner" for congressional action, I would like to suggest three ways to reform Social Security:

1. Elimination of tax on Social Security benefits would serve the same purpose as a cut on both the state and federal income tax and stimulate the economy and credit for federal tax revenue. Social Security would save money and help the state economy.

2. If taxing Social Security is not possible, I suggest all the tax revenue be funneled back into the Social Security fund. Regardless, all Social Security by the state should be used to help the economy.

3. Once Social Security is reformed, make it impossible for the fund for any reason to be cut, allow a choice of contributions to be in the private sector, which would be a strong economic stimulator.

Initiate constant, reliable Social Security.

Now is the time for action.
WILLIAM L. BUDGE